

Fire put out at Saudi refinery

DAHRAN (AP) — A fire broke out at Saudi Arabia's Ras Tanura refinery Friday and burned for about three hours before it was extinguished, government officials said. The cause of the fire was still under investigation, but government officials said there was no sign of sabotage. "It was definitely industrial in nature. It was a small fire," said a Saudi official, speaking on the conditions of anonymity. The fire broke out at the Gulf-side refinery in Dahrhan shortly after 11 a.m. and was extinguished about three hours later. It caused some damage to the refinery's naphtha unit, and there were no reports of injuries. The Ras Tanura refinery has a throughput capacity of about 400,000 barrels per day. Officials said production would not be affected by the fire. The Saudi Press Agency quoted a "responsible source" at the oil ministry in Riyadh as stating that fire started in one of the laboratories at Ras Tanura after some burning material leaked through and the refinery's fire-fighting units extinguished the blaze. The source, who was not named, said three workers were injured as they tried to put out the fire and were hospitalised. One was released and the two others were under treatment.

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Bush invites Aziz to U.S., to send Baker to Iraq

Combined agency dispatches

U.S. President George Bush announced Friday he was inviting the Iraqi Foreign Minister to Washington and sending Secretary of State James Baker to Iraq, but blended the diplomatic overture with a stern warning there would "not be any murky ending" if war breaks out in the Middle East.

Bush said Baker would be prepared "to discuss all aspects of the Gulf crisis," but said the United States would not waiver in its demand for total Iraqi withdrawal, restoration of the toppled Kuwaiti government and release of all foreign nationals held in Iraq and Kuwait.

He stressed that he has no optimism that Baker's mission will have any "big results." Instead, he said the overture demonstrated his desire to "go the extra mile" for a peaceful settlement of the crisis.

Iraq's leadership appeared to have been taken by surprise by Bush's announcement and went immediately into a meeting for consultations, diplomats said.

There were no immediate de-

tails on who attended the meeting.

Earlier, the ruling Revolutionary Command Council headed by President Saddam Hussein said Iraq, a "nation of impossible missions," rejected the U.N. Security Council ultimatum to withdraw from Kuwait and would fight to keep the conquered emirate if necessary.

At the same time, the seven-man council repeated a call for dialogue with the United States to resolve the Gulf crisis and the Palestinian question on "the basis of equality and mutual respect."

For weeks, Iraqi officials have said they would welcome talks with U.S. officials on the Gulf crisis. But they have rejected demands that Iraq first withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait.

"This is not dialogue. These are preconditions imposed to insure our capitulation. We reject such preconditions," Saddam said two weeks ago in an interview with the American television network ABC.

Bush's dramatic peace overture amounted to a shift of position in which the president abandoned an earlier refusal to talk directly

with Baghdad until it had ended its four-month occupation of Kuwait.

"It isn't a trip of concession," Bush said of his willingness to despatch Baker to Baghdad.

Iraq has "got to understand what the alternatives are to comply with the United Nations resolution, and the best way to get that across is one-on-one, Baker looking (at Saddam) right in the eye."

The president stressed that he was keeping the military option open and pledged that, if he decided to free Kuwait by force, it would not be "another Vietnam" in which U.S. troops fought a long, bloody and losing war.

At a news conference after his statement, Bush said he extended the offer "to go the extra mile for peace" following the U.N. action.

Asked if he received any diplomatic signals from Iraq that prompted the offer, Bush replied: "No. The only thing I've heard is that they want to talk, here's an opportunity."

In what appeared to be a possible peace-feeler from Iraq, Bush disclosed that the Iraqis had deli-

vered fruit, vegetables and cigarettes to the beleaguered U.S. embassy in Kuwait earlier Friday. He said the Iraqis planned to deliver medical supplies Saturday to the handful of diplomats holding out in the diplomatic outpost in Kuwait.

The embassy has remained open, cut off from food and other supplies, against Iraqi orders to close and transfer personnel to Baghdad in recognition of Iraq's claim that Kuwait is now an Iraqi province.

"Let's try to be optimistic. This could be a positive sign," Bush said.

The Los Angeles Times reported Friday that Bush had ordered another 300 military planes to the Gulf, making a total of 1,200 planes.

The newspaper said the reinforcement underscored hopes of the U.S. military that massive air power would enable it to avoid a bloody war on the ground.

Secretary of State Baker prefaced Bush's call for talks by saying earlier on Friday that after passage of the U.N. ultimatum "we will engage in 45 days of serious, honest, good-faith hard

efforts to try and find a diplomatic, political and peaceful solution to this problem."

Bush, speaking to reporters during a televised news conference, said he hoped that President Saddam would receive Baker "at a mutually convenient time" between Dec. 15 and Jan. 15.

He also invited Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz to Washington for consultations during the week of Dec. 10.

Iraqi Ambassador to France Abdul Razzak Al Hashimi welcomed Bush's offer as a "very important step" towards peace.

"We hope it is going to achieve what we are all striving for. Negotiations instead of beating the drums of war," Hashimi was quoted as saying by the BBC.

"I am persuaded that if these contacts take place, they will be really, really leading to a peaceful solution," U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar told reporters Friday.

The U.N. chief indicated that he would wait to see the outcome of U.S. efforts before deciding whether he should intervene. "They are trying their hand and I

have the greatest respect for their decision," he said. "I will follow their efforts very carefully and I wish them all success."

A former top-ranking intelligence official told congress Friday that the United States should continue "our present defensive position" in Saudi Arabia rather than wage war with Iraq.

But Odom said the cost of attacking Iraqi forces in Kuwait — or Iraq itself — could prove to

be an even longer U.S. military presence in the region than envisioned with the defensive posture now established.

Odom's testimony came at the end of a week in which members of the Senate Armed Services Committee heard an array of witnesses, including two former chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, urge caution in the standoff with Iraq.

"Every single witness we've had here with differing views on other things, all of them have felt we've overplayed," committee chairman Sam Nunn said at the conclusion of Thursday's testimony.

Nunn is a member of the Democratic Party, which controls both houses of Congress. Bush is a Republican.

The Bush administration could have led off the hearing, perhaps setting the tone. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney and Gen. Colin Powell, current chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were invited to be the initial witnesses.

But they declined and the spotlight has been captured by a

(Continued on page 3)

Bush meets Qian

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. President George Bush met Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen Friday in a move that seemed designed to end Beijing's international isolation following its 1989 military crackdown on a pro-democracy movement (see earlier story on page 8).

Major sworn in as prime minister

LONDON (AP) — Prime Minister John Major was sworn into office Friday by Queen Elizabeth II at a Privy Council meeting at Buckingham Palace. During the ceremony, dating to the middle ages, Major and the five new members of his 22-member cabinet kissed the monarch's hand and were made lifetime members of the Privy Council, a body of just under 400 royal councillors.

Velayati to visit France next week

PARIS (R) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati will travel to France next week for the highest-ranking political visit between the two countries since they resumed relations two years ago. The French Foreign Ministry said Velayati would hold talks with Foreign Minister Roland Dumas. Government sources said they would discuss the Gulf crisis and a bilateral financial dispute dating back to 1974.

Greens block U.S. cargo for Gulf

MANNHEIM, Germany (AP) — Around 100 demonstrators, some carrying posters demanding "no second Vietnam," tried to block a shipment of U.S. military supplies headed for the Gulf, officials said Friday. According to reports from the Green Party, the group of demonstrators blocked the entrance to the Mannheim harbour for four hours late Thursday, preventing supplies to be unloaded from military trucks and brought aboard U.S. ships docked there. In response to the blockade, police held the bulk of the convoy of vehicles carrying supplies back in the U.S. barracks.

Kohl under fire

BONN (R) — A group of Germans who were held and released by Iraq said Friday they wanted criminal charges brought against Chancellor Helmut Kohl for failing to help them when they were held in Iraq and Kuwait. The group asked Bonn prosecutors to charge Kohl with failing to fulfil his duty to help them and "robbing them, by omission, of their freedom." They said he had ignored appeals for help and his opposition to a rescue mission by former Chancellor Willy Brandt had lengthened their time in captivity.

U.N. Gulf resolution sparks calls for more peace efforts

LONDON (Agencies) — Countries around the world on Friday called for greater peace efforts to end the Gulf crisis following the U.N. Security Council's resolution authorising force if Iraq did not leave Kuwait by Jan. 15.

Iraq rejected the ultimatum. U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, the driving force behind the resolution, said it started a diplomatic countdown to avoid war. He added that every effort would be made to find a peaceful, diplomatic solution, but if it failed Baghdad must face the consequences.

Other nations saw it as aiding the chances of a peaceful solution. "The Security Council's decision means a further escalation of the international pressure on Iraq to secure its withdrawal from Kuwait in line with the United Nations' demands," Norway said.

"The time limit given in this decision must be utilised to the maximum to achieve this goal without the use of force," Foreign Ministry spokesman Bjorn Blokkum added.

"With its latest resolution, the Security Council of the United Nations has shown a further sign of its resolve to solve the crisis in the Gulf through friendly

means," said German government spokesman Hans Klein.

But Germany's leftist Greens Party warned: "With its latest decision on the Gulf crisis, the Security Council has started a time bomb. A war, with chemical weapons, is now close at hand in the Near East. Whoever makes ultimatums puts himself in the position of having to put out the fire."

Denmark said the resolution "is not a declaration of war." Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen added: "On the contrary the clear intention of the new resolution is to put the maximum pressure on Iraq to achieve a peaceful solution of the conflict."

Italian Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis said: "What counts most is that while an explicit warning is thrown at Iraq, there is also still room to continue looking for a political solution." Egypt, ignoring any linkage between the Kuwait crisis and the Palestinian issue, called the resolution a "victory."

Burtos Ghali, minister of state for foreign affairs, said Thursday: "The Security Council resolution is a victory for the peace cause and will contribute to the enforcement of the rules of international law."

Israel orders new extended closure of Arab universities

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel ordered four Palestinian universities closed for an additional three months, an Israeli official said Friday.

The four universities have been closed since the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising three years ago.

The military government said at the time that "good behaviour" at Bethlehem would lead to the reopening of other schools.

No major incidents have been reported at Bethlehem since October, and professors at other universities had hoped this signalled the army's closure orders would be lifted from the four remaining universities: Hebron, Bir Zeit, Al Najah in Nabulus and Islamic in Gaza City.

Saeed Erakat, a lecturer in political science at Al Najah, said notification of the closure extensions were received Thursday.

"The closure is part of the Israeli war against the Palestinian people in culture, economics and politics," Erakat said.

The army closures of schools and universities in the West Bank and Gaza have been roundly criticised by Western nations and human rights groups as collective punishment.

Also Friday, Palestinian leaders expressed their anger over the stabbing earlier this week by a volunteer Swedish nurse at a hospital in Gaza.

The attack was blamed on a Palestinian teenager, who fled and left behind a message saying he was protesting Western involvement in the Gulf.



PRAYER FOR RAINS: His Majesty King Hussein Friday led worshippers performing a special prayer for rain held at Tareq area. Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ali Faqir said that such a prayer is performed when there is no rainfall or when the rainfall is delayed or scarce. Taking part in the prayers were His



Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zaid Ben Shaker, Chief Islamic Justice Mohammad Mheilan and senior civil and military officials (Petra photo)

Jordanians see Bush offer to Iraq as breakthrough towards dialogue, peace

By Sama Attyeh

SPECIAL TO THE JORDAN TIMES
AMMAN — U.S. President George Bush's offer to open direct dialogue with Iraq one day after the Security Council passed a resolution allowing the use of force against Iraq was welcomed by Jordanian officials Friday, stressing that it was a positive step towards finding a peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis.

One senior Jordanian official described Bush's decision as a courageous move towards dialogue rather than confrontation.

"Bush's decision to invite the Iraqi foreign minister to Washington and to later send his Secretary of State James Baker to Iraq is a courageous one that complies with world hope for peace," the official told the Jordan Times shortly after the Bush announcement was reported.

He said that His Majesty King Hussein's position since the beginning of the Gulf crisis was becoming a reality and quoted His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan's words: "Let there be no embargo on dialogue."

The American president's

Another senior official, who also did not want to be identified, welcomed the Bush statement, saying dialogue was what Iraq had been calling for and what the U.S. had been constantly rejecting.

The officials agreed that dialogue between the U.S. and Iraq would benefit both countries and the region through finding a political solution rather than they would through war.

"This proves that the foundations and objectives of Jordan were correct right from the beginning, particularly our call on the U.S. to hold direct dialogue with the main party in the conflict, Iraq," said another senior official.

Observers say that Iraq would be propelled by the Bush decision to eventually withdraw from Kuwait "because President Saddam does not believe in tactics, but has a strategic vision to achieve his primary demands (before the takeover of Kuwait). The culmination will be withdrawal," according to the official, who insisted on anonymity.

The American president's

decision was also seen as freeing him of a predicament he placed himself into by preparing for war with his deployment of troops in the Gulf.

Earlier in the day, the Security Council Resolution endorsing the use of force against Iraq drew angry and disappointed reaction from official and popular Jordanian and Palestinian personalities, who accused the United States and its allies of closing the door before a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis.

Thar Al Masri, head of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Lower House of Parliament, said the resolution was regrettable and opened the door for military action.

"The resolution makes me more pessimistic because it brings war closer to the area, and consequently destruction and political upheaval," Masri told the Jordan Times.

"The Arab people will not stay quiet if the U.S. attacked Iraq," commented Masri in a telephone interview.

Masri, along with others interviewed, accused the U.S. and its allies in the U.N. of double standards in the Middle

East. "Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular, have been waiting for more than two decades to enforce international legitimacy," Masri said.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) also accused the U.S. of using double standards in dealing with Middle East issues. In a statement sent to the Jordan Times from Tunis, Bassam Abu Sharif, senior advisor to PLO leader Yasser Arafat, said that such policy "will have serious and dangerous repercussions in the region and probably all over the world."

"Injustice is not tolerated any more. Double standards are not tolerated any more," Abu Sharif said. "Double standards in dealing with the Middle East problems will only lead to further frustration in the region, and in no time to a destructive explosion."

A senior Jordanian official told the Jordan Times that the new resolution proved that the U.S. "was controlling international legitimacy after the cold war."

(Continued on page 3)

More foreigners leave Iraq

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — A group of about 80 foreigners, most of them Swedes, left Friday aboard a chartered Iraqi Airways flight bound for Stockholm, airport sources said.

The sources, quoted by the AP, said the group includes 65 Swedes, five Britons and five Finns. The sources said five or six other Westerners were on the flight, but that their nationalities were not immediately known.

Iraq has said that Sweden trapped by Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait may leave if they wish. The Swedish embassy in Baghdad said Thursday two of its nationals have opted to stay.

All the other Swedes who had been stranded in Kuwait or Iraq since the invasion were on Friday's charter.

Iraq's National Assembly decreed that all Swedes can leave after a message sent by Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein earlier this week.

In his letter, Carlsson reportedly criticised Israeli policy against the Arabs and noted that Kuwait was not the only occupied territory in the Middle East.

Saddam has linked a settlement of the Kuwait crisis to an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. The United States and its allies have rejected the linkage.

A two-member Finnish parliamentary delegation was in Iraq earlier this week to negotiate the release of the Finns.

Two Finns remain in Kuwait voluntarily and three in Iraq, according to Western diplomats.

The Britons on Friday's flight were among a group of 15 whose release was negotiated by British lawmaker Tony Benn.

Benn ended a visit to Iraq Thursday. It was not clear when the other 10 would be allowed to go.

About 1,300 Britons remain in Kuwait and Iraq.

Does the world want Jordan to vanish?

The following article by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan appeared in the Nov. 28 issue of the Christian Science Monitor.

By Hassan Ben Talal

POLITICAL turbulence is hardly unknown in the Middle East, but these past three months have brought storms of catastrophic consequence, particularly to Jordan — a long-standing friend and ally of Western democracies.

If Kuwait was the initial focus of Saddam Hussein's actions, Jordan has become the chief victim of the aftermath of that invasion and the world community's extraordinary response to it. And nobody seems to care.

Plainly put, our small country of 3.5 million people is on the

brink of extinction.

The tragic irony is that precisely because we are complying with United Nations sanctions and embargoes against Iraq, our economy is suffering. Our primary exports of fruits and vegetables have dwindled to a trickle; once-lucrative tourism has practically ended; and development aid from the West, and from our rich Arab brethren, seems to have ceased because of an unfounded perception that Jordan is secretly rooting for Iraq.

Jordan is not an apologist for Iraq. We have made it clear to the Baghdad leadership that we

are opposed to the acquisition of territory by force. We have made it clear that we support international efforts to restore the ousted emir of Kuwait. So what explains the international perception that we are actually a "fifth column" acting on Saddam Hussein's behalf?

I suspect the answer lies in the fact that my elder brother, His Majesty King Hussein, has not added his voice to those clamoring for war against Iraq. Jordan believes that those calling for war do not understand the vast devastation and suffering that further hostilities would bring to our region.

War would unleash hatreds that would extend well beyond the Arab-Israeli syndrome and

irreparably hurt Western and American interests in the Islamic world.

Jordan believes that Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait should be unconditional. However, we also believe that for the sake of building a more just order in the region, the underlying causes that led to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait have to be tackled. The possibility of negotiations and of referring boundary disputes to the World Court should not be ruled out.

Jordan also believes that it is morally reprehensible to take hostages. Jordan is party to the U.N. Convention against the taking of hostages and to other treaties against international terrorism.

The point to be emphasised is that Jordan is not critical of the U.N. nor of its resolutions. On the contrary, we regard them as mandatory. What we disagree with are certain policies followed by some of our allies aimed ostensibly at achieving these objectives.

In other words, we have no disagreement on the need to restore legitimacy and the rule of international law. But we dissent on the means. Should we be punished for being honest? Though dishonesty would have produced quick pecuniary rewards, we chose to stick to our principles and be truthful with the leaders and people of

(Continued on page 3)

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After U.N. vote, next Bush challenge is Congress

WASHINGTON (R) — Now that U.S. President George Bush has won United Nations support for military action against Iraq, the next hurdle is to persuade Congress that his Gulf policy is sound.

Administration officials and congressional leaders have been discussing the merits of recalling Congress, which has adjourned for the Christmas recess, for a special session.

Lawmakers could consider a resolution similar to the one approved Thursday by the U.N. Security Council, authorising the use of force if Iraq does not withdraw from Kuwait by Jan. 15.

The president is scheduled to meet congressional leaders on Friday for further discussions on the matter.

Republican leaders of Congress want a special session, but Democrats and the president have been cool to the idea.

"I think the president should

do that (go to Congress)," said Senator Richard Lugar, an Indiana Republican and senior member of the Foreign Relations Committee.

"Clearly the president's choice was to go to the allies who were working with the United States first and to get the United Nations resolution," Lugar said on ABC television.

Senate Republican leader Robert Dole of Kansas said there was a 50-50 chance that a special session of Congress would be called to debate Gulf policy before Christmas.

Bush commanded solid support for his initial deployment of U.S. troops to defend Saudi Arabia following the Aug. 2 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

But many Democrats in Congress are concerned that his November decision to send an additional 150,000 troops to join U.S. 230,000 servicemen already in the Gulf is putting the United States on an irreversible path to

war.

They want more time, as much as 18 months, to give U.N. trade sanctions against Iraq time to work.

Congress could even force the withdrawal of U.S. troops in the Gulf unless it approves their continued deployment.

It is empowered to do so by the war powers resolution, which gives Congress a greater role in military policy when U.S. troops are put in hostile situations. This was passed in 1973 at the height of the controversial Vietnam war.

House Speaker Thomas Foley, a Washington Democrat, and House Republican leader Robert Michel of Illinois told Bush at a private meeting Thursday that they could not guarantee strong support in Congress for a resolution similar to the one adopted by the U.N. Security Council.

Anything less than the solid backing of Congress could undermine the U.S.-led international coalition against Iraq.

Text of resolution on use of force against Iraq

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Following is the text of the resolution the Security Council adopted Thursday which authorises the use of force if Iraq does not withdraw from Kuwait before Jan. 15.

The resolution, number 678 (1990), was passed by a vote of 12 for, two against (Cuba and Yemen) and one abstention (China).

The Security Council,

RECALLING and reaffirming its resolutions 660 (1990), 661 (1990), 662 (1990), 664 (1990), 665 (1990), 666 (1990), 667 (1990), 669 (1990), 670 (1990), 674 (1990) and 677 (1990),

NOTING that, despite all efforts by the United Nations, Iraq refuses to comply with its obligation to implement Resolution 660 (1990) and the above subsequent relevant resolutions, in flagrant contempt of the council,

MINDEFUL of its duties and responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance and preservation of international peace and security,

DETERMINED to secure full compliance with its decisions,

ACTING under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. Demands that Iraq comply fully with Resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions and decides, while maintaining all its decisions, to allow Iraq one final opportunity, as a pause of goodwill, to do so;

2. Authorises member states cooperating with the government of Kuwait, unless Iraq on or before 15 Jan. 1991 fully implements, as set forth in paragraph 1 above, the foregoing resolutions, to use all necessary means to uphold and implement Security Council Resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area;

3. Requests all states to provide appropriate support for the actions undertaken in pursuance of paragraph 2 of this resolution;

4. Requests the states concerned to keep the council regularly informed on the progress of actions undertaken pursuant to paragraphs 2 and 3 of this resolution;

5. Decides to remain seized of the matter.

Alert called off in Gulf

DHAHRAN, Saudi Arabia (Agencies) — British and American troops in the Gulf have been stood down from a heightened state of alert prompted by fears of an Iraqi attack, a military source said Friday.

The air raid alert was called Thursday, hours before the U.N. Security Council authorised the use of force against Iraq.

"The perception of that extra threat is no longer there," the Saudi-based source, a member of the 27-nation force facing Iraq in the Gulf told Reuters.

"It's off," he added.

A report by Britain's Press Association said British commanders had ordered their troops in the Gulf on yellow alert for the first time, one stage down from a full red-alert.

The report said during the alert troops were ordered to carry respirators and suits protecting them against a possible attack from Iraq's chemical arsenal.

The military source said the U.S. put its 240,000 troops in the Gulf on alert and Britain, as part of the multinational force, was obliged to follow suit.

12 Resolutions against Iraq since August 12

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The resolution authorising the use of force against Iraq adopted by the Security Council Thursday is the 12th U.N. resolution against Iraq since it invaded Kuwait Aug. 2.

The following is a summary of the resolutions dealing with Iraq. Eleven are on substantive issues and one deals with procedures.

The 15-nation body has five permanent members with veto power — the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Britain and France. Its 10 non-permanent members are Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Ethiopia, Finland, Ivory Coast, Malaysia, Romania, Yemen and Zaire.

1. Aug. 2: The Council condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and demanded Baghdad withdraw its forces. The vote for resolution 660 was 14 to 0, with Yemen not participating.

2. Aug. 6: The Council imposed stringent sanctions on all trade and from Iraq except for medicine, and in humanitarian circumstances, foodstuffs. The vote was 13-0 with Cuba and Yemen abstaining.

3. Aug. 9: The Council declared Iraq's annexation of Kuwait null and void. The vote was unanimous.

4. Aug. 18: The Council demanded Iraq allow foreign nationals to leave Iraq and Kuwait and rescind its order to close diplomatic missions in Kuwait. The vote was unanimous.

5. Aug. 25: The Council permitted member states to use limited naval force in the Gulf to ensure compliance with economic sanctions by calling on them to use "measures commensurate to the specific circumstances" to halt maritime shipping in order to inspect cargoes. The vote was 13 to 0 with Cuba and Yemen abstaining.

6. Sept. 13: The Council approved shipment of food to Iraq and Kuwait in case of humanitarian need but only if it was distributed through the United Nations and similar bodies. It reaffirmed that medicine was not included in the embargo. The vote for resolution 666 was 13 to 2 with Cuba and Yemen voting against.

7. Sept. 16: The Council condemned raids by Iraqi troops on French and other diplomatic missions in Kuwait. The vote was unanimous.

8. Sept. 24: The Council passed unanimously a procedural measure entrusting its Sanctions Committee with evaluating and reporting back to the full Council recommendations on assistance from countries suffering economically from the trade embargo.

9. Sept. 25: The Council prohibited all air traffic with Iraq and Kuwait except in humanitarian circumstances and flight approved by a Council Committee on sanctions. It also called on states to detain ships of Iraq, registry which enter their ports and which are being or have been used in violation of economic sanctions. The vote was 14 to 1 with Cuba voting against.

10. Oct. 29: The Council asked states to document evidence of financial losses and human rights violations resulting from the invasion. The resolution encourages the secretary general to undertake peace efforts but leaves the door open for other unspecified actions if Iraq fails to withdraw. The vote was 13 to 0 with Cuba and Yemen abstaining.

11. Nov. 28: The Council asked the U.N. secretary general to safeguard a smuggled copy of Kuwait's population register in order to foil attempts by Iraq to repopulate the emirate with Iraqis. The vote was unanimous.

12. Nov. 29: If Iraq does not comply by Jan. 15, 1991 with previous Council resolutions calling for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait, nations are authorised "to use all necessary means" to ensure specifically mention force. The vote was 12 for, two (Cuba and Yemen) abstained, and one (China) abstained.

U.N. vote puts Gulf crisis on war timetable

By Alan Elsner
Reuters

WASHINGTON — A U.N. Security Council vote authorising the use of force against Iraq if it does not leave Kuwait by mid-January has put the Gulf crisis on a six-week countdown to war, analysts say.

If Iraq defies this United Nations resolution as it has defied the previous 11 passed since it invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2, the United States will not be able to delay attacking it for very long, the analysts said.

"Although the resolution does not require immediate resort to force, tactically the United States cannot postpone action much beyond the deadline," said Martin Indyk, director of the Washington Institute for Near East Studies.

"Any extended delay would allow Iraq to win a major psychological victory by claiming it had called the bluff of the U.S. and the entire United Nations," he said.

Analysts were divided on how Iraq might react to the resolution. The administration of President George Bush clearly hopes that it will convince Baghdad that its only hope of survival is to withdraw from Kuwait.

But some experts thought Iraq would be more likely to offer a partial concession, such as a withdrawal from the southern half of the emirate while retaining the northern half.

"I do not believe that we

will see a day where the Iraqi leader will send us a letter saying he has now accepted our terms," said former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

"The much more likely result (is) that around the deadline of the U.N. resolution or shortly thereafter, Iraq will offer some sort of negotiation," he told the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee Wednesday.

Iraq's strategy would be to drag Washington into a protracted process "in which it can never be shown that success is impossible, but in which at the same time success is never quite reached," Kissinger said.

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Such offers could misfire and may not prevent war. The administration has consistently rejected what U.S. Secretary of State James Baker has described as "the siren song of partial solutions," and is aware it cannot maintain its massive military deployment indefinitely.

In the same Senate hearing, General David Jones, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, compared the situation in the Gulf crisis to that of the days preceding the outbreak of World War I in Europe.

"In 1914, the contending powers set in motion a mobilisation and deployment juggernaut that soon achieved a momentum of its own," he said.

"Each side's reaction to the other's growing force levels and troop movements became in itself the rationale for war and the terrible slaughter that followed. There are disturbing parallels as we escalate our force levels in the Middle East," he said.

In a sense, the U.N. vote is a necessary component of Bush's decision earlier this month to send an additional 150,000 troops to Saudi Arabia to build a credible offensive option.

Military experts said they believe Washington will not be able to sustain, supply, train and maintain the morale of such a massive force for very long. It would either have to attack or begin to reduce troop levels.

"The risk is that the problems inherent in maintaining the offensive military option could create irresistible pressures to initiate combat irrespective of the progress of the U.N. sanctions," said Jones, who headed the U.S. military in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Donald McHenry said the U.N. vote in itself did not give the United States sufficient authority to go to war and was certainly no substitute for a strong domestic consensus.

"He (Bush) has got to build up the necessary political consensus to support the use of force, and that consensus will require that he exhaust peaceful measure. It will require that he show that sanctions won't work," he said.

Mubarak's party heads for poll victory

CAIRO (Agencies) — President Hosni Mubarak's ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) headed for an overwhelming majority in parliamentary elections marred by clashes that left at least three dead and dozens wounded.

By Friday evening, unofficial tabulations showed the NDP with 89 seats and independents 26. Runoffs next Thursday were declared necessary for 136 seats.

The preliminary results were distributed by the government's

Middle East News Agency (MENA). It said that Interior Minister Abdul Halim Mousa will announce the official returns on Saturday at noon.

Security sources said five people were killed and 92 were injured in gunbattles and riots during the general elections.

The worst violence in Thursday's voting was near the Mediterranean port of Damietta, where police and villagers exchanged gunfire and security

force vehicles were set ablaze, the security sources said.

Four people were killed and 63, including two policemen, were hurt when villagers tried to storm voting stations and mark all ballot papers with the name of their favoured candidate, a Nasrerie.

The Nasserite politician, Di-aeddin Daoud, a supporter of Egypt's late President Gamal Abdul Nasser, was standing as an independent.

Rebel assault gains strength in Chad

PARIS (AP) — A rebel offensive in Chad is gaining strength, French officials said Thursday. The government ordered 150 foreign legionnaires to reinforce French troops already in Chad, but said they would not join the fighting.

Chad's government contends the rebels are backed by Libya, a view endorsed this week by the U.S. State Department.

France has described the three-week-old war as an internal conflict between Chadians. Libya, which denies backing the rebels, accused the United States of "premeditated hostile intentions."

A French Foreign Ministry spokesman, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said Thursday that "the situation is worsening, and the battles are more severe." He said the rebel offensive has grown in size, "and government forces are encountering difficulties on the ground."

Other French sources said rebel leader Idriss Deby's forces were moving steadily westwards, away from the border with Sudan and towards the capital, N'djamena.

The French Defence Ministry said a 150-strong company of the second foreign parachute regiment would be sent to N'djamena. The move was aimed at "bettering the security of our troops and assuring, if need be, the protection of our nationals."

There are an estimated 1,250 French civilians in Chad, a former French colony.

France already had 1,000 troops in Chad, and recently shifted a company from N'djamena to the northeastern town of Abeche near the main combat zone.

Defence Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement said France was studying requests from Chad for arms, but gave no indication what the response would be.

He said French policy was to avoid defending governments against internal opposition, even in the case of a government which France might help in the event of external aggression. France has said that President Hissene Habre's troops suffered considerable losses in the recent fighting. The two sides have claimed take and retake several towns, but neither has offered casualty figures.

Habre visited the war zone last week and, according to some accounts, narrowly escaped the hands of the rebels. Habre was seen on Chad TV Wednesday welcoming a foreign dignitary to N'djamena.

Deby helped Habre take power in 1982 and formerly was a military adviser to the president, but fled in April 1989 amidst allegations he was part of a coup plot.

France sent thousands of troops to Chad in February 1986 at the height of fighting in northern Chad against Libyan-backed rebels. Libya then occupied the northern part of the poor, landlocked country, but was chased out in a series of battles in 1987.



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JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	16:36	Maghreb
Tel. 73111-19	17:58	Isha
PROGRAMME ONE		
15:00	Teletext	
15:30	Koran	
15:45	Programme review	
17:30	Children programme	
18:30	Educational programme	
18:30	Local series	
19:50	Programme review	
20:00	News in Arabic	
21:30	Arabic series	
21:30	Local programme	
21:50	Programme review	
22:30	Arabic series	
23:00	News in Arabic	
23:10	Series continued	
PROGRAMME TWO		
18:00	Le de de Fort Boyard	
19:00	News in French	
19:15	Adopted Huron France	
20:00	News in Arabic	
20:30	Good Morning Miss Bliss	
21:00	Encounter	
21:30	Feature film, "A Marriage of Inconvenience"	
22:00	News in English	
22:30	Continuation of the film	

CHURCHES	USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swefelth, Tel. 810740	AMMAN:
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632785	Dr. Bassem Karadash 709200
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	Dr. Hani Al Zaraq 70709
Church of the Assumption Tel. 637440	Dr. Majed Abu Saadeh 81635
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	Dr. Farouq Nour 78660
Terracotta Church Tel. 622366	First pharmacy 661912
Church of the Assumption Tel. 623541	Reford's pharmacy 73636
Anglican Church Tel. 625393, Tel. 628543	Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	Nairokh pharmacy 62672
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	Al Salem pharmacy 644945
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	Shmiciani pharmacy 637660
Assiout International Church Tel. 683726	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811205	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
It will be partly cloudy and winds will be southeasterly moderate, becoming in the afternoon southwesterly	

IRBID:	REPAIRS	ZARQA NATIONAL HOSPITAL
Dr. Abdul Majid Sabahin (—)	623101	(09)991071
Al Sa'ra's pharmacy (985238)	Abdul Telephone Repairs 661101	Al Sa'ra Hospital (09)986732
	Jordan Television 773111	
	Radio Jordan 774111	
	Water Authority 680100	
	Jordan Electricity Authority 815615	
	Electric Power Company 636381	
	RJ Flight Information 08-53200	
	Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200	
HOSPITALS		
AMMAN:		
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32		
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 64281/6		
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 64241/2		
Jabal Amman Maternity 64262		
Malhas, J. Amman 636140		
Palestine, Shmeisani 66417/4		
Shmeisani Hospital 669131		
University Hospital 845845		
Al-Mansour Hospital 66727/9		
The Islamic, Abdali 66617/37		
Al-Ahli, Abdali 66416/6		
Al-Mahajra, J. Amn 77701/3		
Al-Bashir, J. Amn 77511/26		
Anay, Marja 89161/15		
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50		
Amal Hospital 674155		
ZARQA:		
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)98373		

Other Flights (Terminal 2)	DEPARTURES	MARKET PRICES
13:20	Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	Upper/lower price in Jds per kg.
13:25	08:00 Agaba (RJ)	Apple 520 / 430
13:30	11:00 Tripoli (RJ)	Banana 500 / 450
13:35	12:00 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)	Beans 450 / 400
13:40	12:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)	Beans 260 / 200
13:45	12:30 Madrid (RJ)	Cabbage 120 / 80
13:50	12:45 London (RJ)	Carrot 250 / 200
13:55	13:00 Rome, Paris (RJ)	Corn 180 / 120
14:00	13:15 Geneva, Brussels (RJ)	Cucumbers (large) 150 / 80
14:05	13:30 Jeddah (RJ)	Cucumbers (small) 500 / 400
14:10	13:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)	Dates 180 / 120
14:15	14:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)	Eggplant 500 / 400
14:20	14:15 Doha (RJ)	Fig 500 / 400
		Garlic 1000 / 500
		Grapes 600 / 500
		Lemon 180 / 140
		Mallow 180 / 120
		Marrow (large) 120 / 80
		Marrow (small) 120 / 80
		Onion (dry) 220 / 180
		Onion (green) 250 / 200
		Okra 600 / 500
		Orange 280 / 220
		Pepper (hot) 180 / 140
		Pepper (sweet) 120 / 80
		Potato 230 / 200
		Radish 200 / 150
		Sage 600 / 500
		Spinach 200 / 150
		Tomatoes 150 / 100

Jordan Times

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At last, a breakthrough

U.S. PRESIDENT George Bush's offer to receive the Iraqi foreign minister and to send his secretary of state to Baghdad is the breakthrough that the world has needed all along to solve the Gulf crisis. Without such a courageous and historic decision taken by the U.S. president, there would have been but one way to go: devastating war and destruction and lasting instability and violence in this part of the world, especially in the aftermath of the adoption of Resolution 678 by the U.N. Security Council.

Right from the beginning, Baghdad insisted that it was ready for dialogue with the Americans and the Saudi Arabians in order to reach a political solution to the problem of Kuwait. Furthermore, President Saddam has stated very clearly that he is ready and willing to discuss all aspects of the Gulf situation, which also means withdrawal from Kuwait. But what the Iraqis would have never accepted is to leave in humiliation, without even the right to be heard by the countries of the alliance arrayed against them, let alone assurances against the destruction of their country under all other circumstances.

Fortunately, reason seems to have prevailed, and we now have a situation where the antagonists can sit together to try and hammer out a formula acceptable for everybody and satisfactory to all. And this is in essence what Jordan has always worked for and persisted in its efforts to achieve. Much work needs to be done of course in order to ensure that President Bush's step towards peace does not turn into a futile political exercise. But there is no question that Iraq will reciprocate the offer with all the goodwill needed to make progress — and quickly — towards not only solving the Gulf crisis but also tackling the range of other problems in the region on top of which lies the Palestinian problem.

The Bush administration, for its part, needs to do its share to understand more deeply the frustrations and aspirations of Arabs and to do what is necessary to address them. We are a nation that yearns for peace, provided it is just, and friendship with other peoples and nations, as long as it is based on mutual respect and interests. Nobody amongst us wants to continue to live in strife and struggle, and we certainly do not need to add to the list of our enemies.

By his offer, Mr. Bush has pushed the door wide open for himself to enter history as a great U.S. president. He will only be great if there is a political solution to the Gulf crisis.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

ON the anniversary of international solidarity with the Palestinian people His Majesty King Hussein chose to draw the world community's attention to the major challenge it is facing now in Palestine due to Israel's atrocities there and the need for the establishment of peace based on justice. Al Ra'i daily said. The paper echoed the King's call for the U.N. Security Council to deal with world issues on equal footing, and noted that the world organisation had failed in implementing its own resolutions concerning the Palestine question over the past 23 years. The paper noted also that the United Nations is displaying unusual enthusiasm towards implementing Security Council resolutions concerning the Gulf issue, but ignoring the Palestine issue and the sufferings of the Palestinian people due to the continued Israeli occupation. Failure to implement international legitimacy on equal footing and with fairness and justice, the paper said, is bound to cost the U.N. organisation its own credibility and its own existence. If the world is to have a new order, it won't be able to exist in an atmosphere that lacks the rudiments of justice and peace; and the end of the cold war would mean nothing to mankind if it was only to serve the interests of the two super powers, the paper continued. Should the Middle East remain open to all forms of terrorism and American hegemony, said the paper, the region would sooner or later be transformed into explosive spot that would cause the obliteration of millions of people.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily launches bitter criticism of Saudi Arabia for bribing the Soviet Union with \$4 billion to ensure its vote at the Security Council in support of Washington's quest for an authorisation to use force against Iraq in the Gulf. Tariq Masarweh says that votes at the Security Council were bought with money paid by selfish parties to the major powers which are pretending to be bankrupt awaiting someone to dole out to them sums of money to secure their support. China for its part has kept silent and there is no doubt that the Saudis had their eyes on Peking and have contemplated making a similar move there, says the writer. The major powers are gaining a lot of money by exploiting their votes at the Security Council on the one hand, and by leasing their armed forces to serve as mercenary forces on the other; but the non-aligned nations and the poor countries of the world are left to pay for the high prices of oil so that they will be poorer as the rich become richer, says the writer. The writer is critical of the so-called new world order which is being founded on deceit and underhand dealings while the drums of war continue to beat, opening the way for more sufferings for the poor nations which are being crushed under the heels of the new imperialist forces. The writer says that all the honorable people of the world have no choice but to take up arms and fight in defence of their existence and their dignity.

The arguments for and against democracy in the Middle East and even in Iraq

The Gulf crisis has intensified the debate on political freedoms in the Arab World. Jordan Times Staff Reporter Lamis K. Andoni talked to analysts and political activists in Amman and Baghdad who argue that the struggle for Arab independence and unity in the current crisis and should not be waged at the expense of democratisation in the Arab World, including in Iraq.

IN ITS quest to mobilise public opinion against Iraq, the U.S. has often cited the state of political freedoms in the country to justify tough political, economic and even military steps against Baghdad. The American tactic has prompted many Arab intellectuals to renege any criticism, at this stage, of the Iraqi political system.

But there are indications that inside and outside Iraq there is an emerging trend to argue that liberalisation of the system — to an extent allowed by the state of war and siege that the country is under — could be crucial to the result of the current confrontation with the West.

Advocates of this line of thinking, however, stress that the struggle to counter the international blockade against Iraq and to avert a military action should be given priority. A number of intellectuals interviewed in Iraq — and in Jordan — argue that the nationalist struggle should no longer justify repression.

"In the history of the Arab and Third World, repression was often justified by one national cause or another. This argument has proved to be wrong in many cases but we have not learned," said an Iraqi novelist.

He, as well as other Iraqi, Jordanian and Palestinian intellectuals, argues that in the case of the Arab World abs-

ence of democracy has contributed to deepening subservience of the Arab order to the West. An example often cited in Iraq and Jordan is the experience of the late Egyptian president, Jamal Abdul Nasser.

Like Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Nasser challenged Western interests in the Arab World emerging as a nationalist hero. Both Abdul Nasser and now Saddam incurred Western wrath that amounted to calls, if not attempts, for their physical elimination.

But now some historians and writers believe that Nasser's Achilles' heel, despite his tremendous popular appeal, was his failure to recognise the role of political freedoms and pluralism in consolidating the revolutionary nationalist base in Egypt.

"We used to demonstrate in favour of Abdul Nasser in this street," said an Iraqi artist in his mid-fifties on Al Rashid street, in downtown Baghdad. "We supported his nationalist struggle but we were oblivious to repression in Egypt."

According to this argument, repeated by some political activists in Jordan, repression in Egypt eventually backlashed against Nasser's nationalist slogans and ideals giving the way for the emergence and dominance of President Anwar Sadat's pro U.S. policies.

The collapse of Communism

in Eastern Europe and the surfacing of rightist and even racist trends and movements are also cited as yet another example of setbacks suffered by egalitarian principles as a reaction to long years of repression.

Many staunch supporters of Iraq, however, reject these arguments by countering that such a debate would only serve the American campaign.

"No voice should be louder than that of the nationalist battle," is the current slogan raised in Jordan and elsewhere in defence of the Iraqi government.

When asked, Iraqi officials do not dispute the need for liberalisation but imply that the process is not possible at this stage. Speaker of the Iraqi National Assembly, Saad Mahdi Saleh, told the Jordan Times in an interview that the Gulf crisis has interrupted a liberalisation process in Iraq.

He was referring to a new constitution which involves presidential elections and allows for political pluralism in Iraq.

Some Iraqis interviewed were very skeptical that the government was ready to allow a genuine liberalisation of the system. Others, including some critics of President Saddam, believe that the current crisis has unleashed popular demands for political freedoms across the Arab World and Iraq is no exception.

"The fast developments and the massive military build-up in the Gulf have intensified popular resentment of Arab regimes which do not allow for wider political participation; people want to take part in determining the destiny of the region," said the Iraqi novelist, who asked to remain anonymous.

Even in the highest echelons of the Ba'athist Party structure,

officials and thinkers are now underscoring the essential role of democracy in the nationalist struggle.

"The dangers threatening the Arab World, as crucial as they are, should not justify the sacrifice of democracy," said Dr. Elias Farah, a Syrian-born member of the Ba'athist Party National Command.

In an interview with the Jordan Times in Baghdad, the

freedoms in the country," said Amareh, who stressed that the struggle for democracy in Jordan or any Arab state is inseparable from the struggle for democracy in the Arab World in general.

Jordanian novelist Mo'nes Razzaq went further by publicly calling last week, in an article that appeared in al Dustoor Arabic daily, on Saddam to free political prisoners and re-

"The fast developments and the massive military build-up in the Gulf have intensified popular resentment of Arab regimes which do not allow for a wider political participation; people want to take part in determining the destiny of the region," said the Iraqi novelist, who asked to remain anonymous. Even in the highest echelons of the Ba'athist Party structure, officials and thinkers are now underscoring the essential role of democracy in the nationalist struggle."

Swiss educated philosopher said, however, that the process towards democracy in the Third World is often interrupted by Western intervention or other challenges.

But as the Iraqi people are expected to endure a continuing international blockade, if not war, there are activists and intellectuals in Amman and in Baghdad who argue that an easing up on restrictions of political expression will consolidate the domestic front.

Mohammed Al Amareh, a Jordanian columnist and a co-founder of the newly established Arab Progressive Democratic Party (APDP), expressed concerns among Arab nationalists in Jordan that the absence of democratic freedoms in Iraq could undermine its position in the current confrontation.

"We do not want the new Arab renaissance project led by Iraq to suffer a setback as a result of the lack of political

habilitate his political opponents who were executed or stripped of their positions in the Iraqi government and Ba'athist party.

Razzaq, who supports Iraq in its current confrontation with the West, was criticised by other writers who felt that by raising the question of political freedoms in Iraq he could be playing into the hands of the West.

In Amman, concern that Iraq could be attacked and even destroyed overshadows criticism of the repressive nature of the Iraqi system. "What is the use of demanding political freedoms in Iraq when the whole country is threatened with being wiped out?" asked a Jordanian activist who has always been critical of the Iraqi regime's internal policies.

In Baghdad, however, one is struck by the bitterness displayed by some Iraqis who expressed resentment of what they viewed as Arab intelle-

tuals' and activists' insensitivity to the state of political freedoms in Iraq.

"You are perpetuating the personality cult here," the Iraqi novelist said. "Why don't you emphasise your support for the Iraqi people (in pro-Iraq demonstrations) instead of exclusively focusing on the leader? Why don't you press for the easing of political restrictions in Iraq?" He asked when watching scenes of a pro-Iraq demonstration on Iraqi television.

This reaction was echoed repeatedly by other Iraqis who claimed that many others felt the same way. Wide-ranging interviews with Iraqis in Baghdad conducted by the Jordan Times did not support this claim, although many expressed curiosity about it, and explicit admiration for the democratisation process in Jordan.

Several Jordanian political activists and intellectuals were rather surprised by the way some Iraqis have understood the mass rallies which have been organised in support of Iraq.

"We support the Iraqi people. But Saddam has become a symbol of the current struggle. Do not forget that the West is focusing on Saddam as a person and a symbol," said one Jordanian political activist.

In Baghdad as in Amman Western claims that the campaign against Iraq aims at defending democracy and freedom is received with scorn.

"The West did not hesitate in supporting Saddam on many occasions in the past," said an artist who is very critical of the Iraqi president. "The U.S. concern for human rights and democracy in the Arab World is a big lie, however. The Americans are trying to dictate to us who should and should not rule this country or the other in accordance with their interests. Is this democracy?"

'America has become your god'

By Mamoun Fandy

CARBONDALE, Illinois — "It is not the world against Iraq. It is the West against Islam."

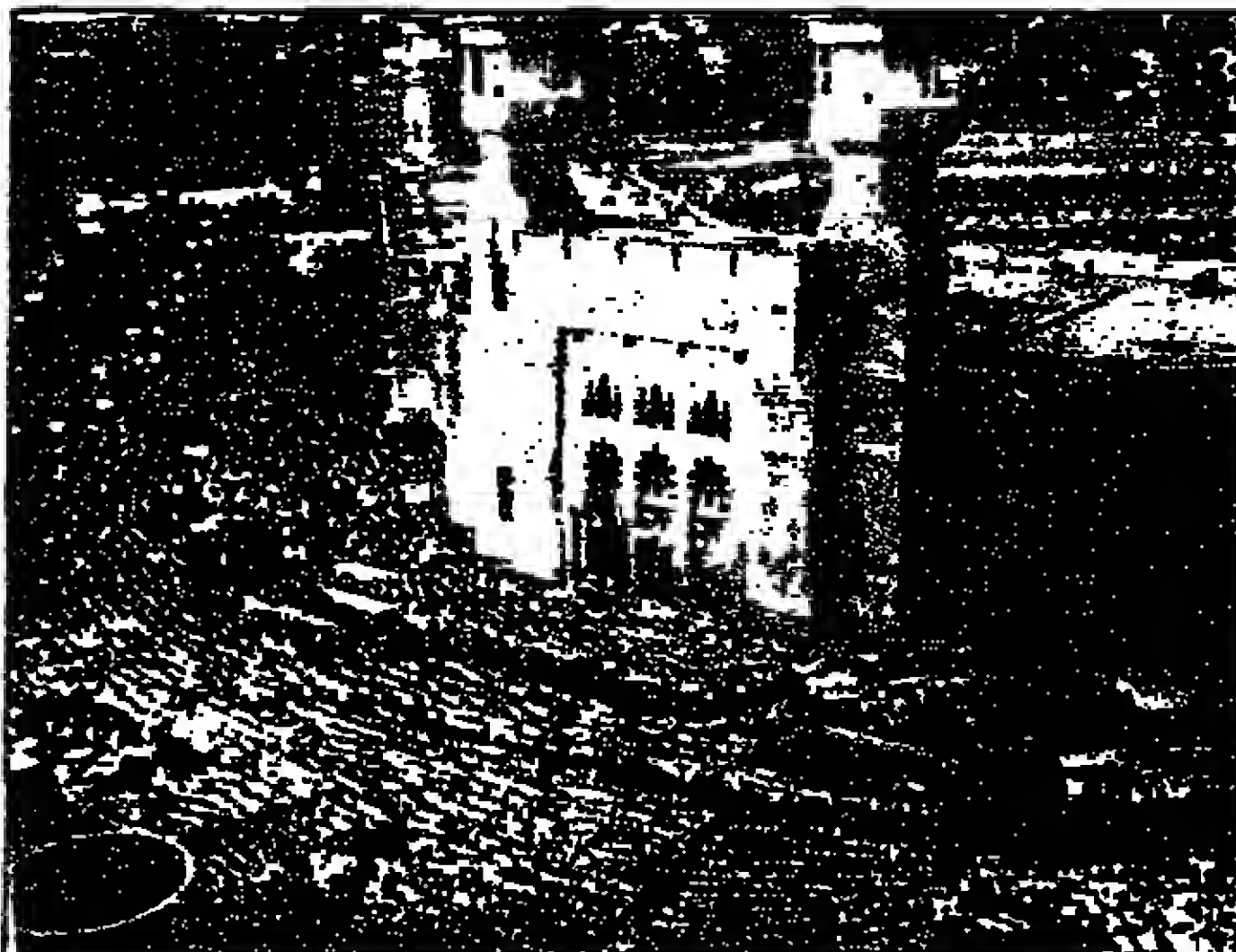
The speaker is not a leftist or a nationalist. He is Dr. Safar Al Hawali, dean of Islamic Studies at Umm Al Qura University in Mecca. Cassette tapes of his speeches denouncing the American deployment in Saudi Arabia are circulating throughout that kingdom — just as tapes of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's speeches once permeated the Shah's Iran.

As the recent crushing of a protest by women drivers in Saudi Arabia indicates, the Saudi regime is paying strict attention to the demands of fundamentalists. The Hawali tapes are rattling the house of Saud and undermining support for the escalating U.S. military deployment.

Dr. Hawali is one of Islam's most respected theologians and the primary spokesman for the Wahabi sect. Much of the power and legitimacy of the Saudi family comes from its alliance with the Wahabis. The Saudis themselves adhere to this sect, and their conquest of the Arabian Peninsula early in this century was justified on the grounds that they were bringing this puritanical form of Islam to those who had become religiously lax.

If the people of Saudi Arabia were surprised by the American deployment, Dr. Hawali says, it is because they have not been reading what has been written in the United States. America, he asserts, has long been planning to occupy Saudi Arabia. The invasion of Kuwait was a pretext. Dr. Hawali reads from Richard Nixon's memoirs, in which the former president discusses the possibility of a permanent American presence in the Middle East. He also notes that the Carter doctrine of 1977 sought a permanent presence in the region as well, and that the division President Jimmy Carter suggested be sent to "protect American interests" — the 82nd Airborne — is the very division President Bush sent first to Saudi Arabia.

Dr. Hawali then cites an article in the spring 1981 issue of Foreign Affairs that postulates that local Gulf regimes would risk revolution if the United States came into the region without some face-



Pilgrims kneel before the sacred mosque at Mecca, goal of all Muslims at least once in their lives. Muslims all over the world have cried out in anger at the deployment of foreign forces in Saudi Arabia where the holiest Islamic sites are located.

saving pretext. One such pretext might be a threatened invasion by Iraq.

The history of the Western powers in the Middle East, especially Britain and France, is not a pretty one, and Dr. Hawali reinforces the idea of a Western threat by quoting the Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet warned that "Rome (what the West called the Byzantine Empire) will attack you in many forms." The Crusaders, the British and French colonialists, and now the Americans are all forms of "Rome," Dr. Hawali warns.

Long aware of America's intention to use "defence of the region" as a pretext to occupy it, the Gulf states have repeatedly refused to allow the U.S. to establish military bases in their countries, says Dr. Hawali. Ten years ago, when the U.S. suggested that an American base in Kuwait would protect Kuwait from Iran and Iraq, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad, Kuwait's foreign minister, is reported to have replied: "To me the whole thing sounds like a film scenario with two directors, the Americans and the Soviets. We don't need either of you."

Consequently, Dr. Hawali implies, the U.S. and the Soviets spent the next 10 years arming Iraq so that it would indeed be a threat and Kuwait truly would need Western help.

Dr. Hawali stops short of calling for the overthrow of the Saudi family and advocates no violent actions. Instead, he says that the Saudis and their

clergy have gravely misunderstood their religion and must atone before God. It is contrary to the laws of Islam, Dr. Hawali says, to join with non-Muslims in a battle against Muslims. His command of Islamic history and theology is so comprehensive that any Muslim would be obliged to weigh his arguments.

Finally, he accuses all who have accepted the deployment of an impiety verging on idolatry. "When the Mujahideen drove the Russians from Afghanistan, you did not say, 'God helped them.' You said, 'America helped them.' Now, when we are threatened by war, you do not say, 'God will protect us.' You say, 'America will protect us.' America has become your god."

These are strong words from a man whom most Saudis regard as their religious spokesman. These tapes clearly show that Islamic fundamentalism is not on the wane despite the death of Ayatollah Khomeini; it is again allying itself with nationalism in a country that the U.S. considers "friendly" and "moderate."

Fundamentalists are the cornerstone of the Saudi regime. However, their perception of the occupation and the enemy are different from that of the royal family. They are more inclined to believe Dr. Hawali when he says: "If Iraq has occupied Kuwait, then America has occupied Saudi Arabia. The real enemy is not Iraq. It is the West."

The above article is reprinted from the New York Times.

'The Yemenis' departure has left some scars'

By Donna Fenn Heintzen

The Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — The familiar rugged faces and slight builds of the Yemenis, once conspicuous in markets across Saudi Arabia, are slowly disappearing as a result of the Gulf crisis.

Egyptians are showing up in large numbers to replace them, along with Indians and Pakistanis in a gradual transformation of the lower echelons of the kingdom's labour force.

The unique position of the almost 2 million Yemeni workers here disintegrated after their government supported Iraq following its Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait.

Saudi Arabia retaliated by ending the work and trade privileges which Yemenis alone enjoyed among the scores of other workers in Saudi Arabia, primarily because of the common Saudi-Yemeni borders. About half of all Yemeni workers were forced to return home after the privileges were revoked.

Saudi Arabia has a population of about 15 million. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak helped lead the Arab coalition against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein from the start of the invasion, and Egyptian workers are reaping the benefits.

Informed sources here expected the Egyptian labour force, already estimated at 750,000, to grow by thousands as the Yemenis depart.

"I wouldn't be surprised if more than 10,000 had already been brought in," said one diplomatic source. He also noted that several large companies plan to hire Egyptians and have applied to the interior ministry for work visas.

"We've even heard that Egyptian workers whose contracts were renewed in September received generous raises in salary," said on source. "It was the private sector showing their appreciation for Egypt's stand."

The sources spoke on condition of anonymity. The Yemenis' departure has left some scars. A trip down Riyadh's Wazira Street reveals scores of empty storefronts, the interiors nothing but rubble and a few remnants of goods sold in haste.

Some Saudis complain that Yemeni bakers, known for their delicious Arabic bread, will be



All Bush's horses and all Bush's men Will never put the Mideast together again.

sorely missed and impossible to replace.

Following the invasion, Saudi Arabia decreed that Yemeni nationals, previously allowed to work in Saudi Arabia without formal sponsorship, would have to find work sponsors. Few were able to, forcing the exodus of Yemeni workers.

Although the move against Yemen was an angry response to Yemen President Ali Abdullah Saleh's alignment with Saddam, diplomatic sources here said the decision would have made sense regardless of the political situation.

"To have 10 per cent to your total population running around without documentation just seems silly," said one diplomat. "It was silly before the invasion, but it was really brought home to them after Aug. 2."

The effect of the new rules on Saudi Arabia's economy has been minimal. A former Saudi government advisor noted that "there's a lot of underemployment here anyway and the Yemenis contributed to that. I don't think there will be major repercussions from

their loss. In fact, I think there will be some benefit."

Businesses previously in competition with a plethora of Yemeni merchants would now prosper, he said.

A diplomat, however, pointed out that Saudi Arabia may feel the loss of Yemeni spending power. While the average Yemeni salary is only 700 riyals (\$186) a month, Yemenis do not remit the greater part of their salaries back home.

"Most of the expatriates can't bring their families with them, but the Yemenis can," said the diplomat. "So they don't send as much money home. It's an important demographic difference — most of the money they earn goes back into the Saudi economy."

Sources estimated that approximately 1 million Yemenis will remain in Saudi Arabia under official sponsorship. Few expect that number to increase when the Gulf crisis is over.

"I wouldn't like my government to give equal opportunity to those who did not stand with us," said the chief operating officer of a major company here.

Economic reform and 'resistance' in Yugoslavia

By Dragovan Lazarevic

THE reform programme of premier Ante Markovic and his government is successfully being effected. Hyperinflation has been curbed, pluralism in property ownership is gradually becoming a reality, the national currency has become convertible for the first time since World War II, the foreign currency reserves have increased three-fold, and the economic relations with foreign countries are almost totally liberalised.

Most people agree that considerable results have been achieved but those criticising the government's programme put forward figures on the drop in production, the overvaluation of the national currency, the increase in unemployment etc. However, it seems that the government had foreseen that the reform measures would have these consequences.

The most "shocking" part of the economic reform was the fact that the national currency (dinar) was bound to the West German mark in a ratio of 7 to 1. Although the government had planned that the rate of exchange be unchangeable for only six months, this ratio is still in force and the government has promised that it will remain so. The country's foreign currency reserves guarantee the stability of the national currency because they have exceeded \$10 billion in circumstances when imports have been virtually liberalised (95 per cent of consumer goods) and in a situation when prices in 92 per cent of cases are freely fixed.

In only one year, Yugoslavia has become the first among East European countries to establish the convertibility of its currency (although it is only an internal convertibility) and to submit its monetary policy to the foreign discipline known by all countries of the European monetary market. The Yugoslav people can today freely buy, exchange and take out of the country marks, dollars, pounds and other world currencies.

During the past year the foundations of the "Eastern sin of socialism" have been undermined — i.e. public property is gradually being privatised despite opposition and difficulties. In only eight months, 45,000 private and joint companies have been founded, creating some 300,000 new jobs. For a country in which the unemployment rate is still high (15 per cent), this change in the structure of economic ownership has special importance. State, private, joint and stock

companies as well as their owners, whether Yugoslav citizens or foreign nationals, have equal rights.

It could be said the premier's market concept has obtained political consensus, despite the fact that it has not been equally received in all parts of the country and by all parties. There are those who are only formally in favour of a market economy while striving to preserve their monopolistic positions.

On the other hand, there are opposition parties which have accepted the premier's economic programme as their own. The government considers that the programme of reforms will ensure a peaceful solution to the current political crisis, and is forming a new political coalition on the basis of this programme: the Alliance of Reformist Forces of Yugoslavia which will take part in the forthcoming multi-party elections.

However, there is a lot of resistance to the changes. It is mostly a matter of attempts to halt the transformation of public ownership into private or joint ownership. It was on the basis of public ownership that the sole political party in the country (the communist party) ensured its leading position in past decades. That is why the resistance to the reforms is coming mostly from those political forces which are against the already tangible changes on the political and economic scene in the country. It is also an attempt to save a state with a one-party system and monopoly of power, which the reform is trying to abolish.

There are also some international circumstances which have not exactly made things easier.

On the domestic economic scene, there has been in the past few months an increase in personal and collective spending beyond the limits laid down in the reform programmes. That is why by the end of year the government will have to take measures to control the excessive spending. Prices increased in October by 8 per cent which is considerably higher than the government's predictions, although it is far from the last year's 2,600 per cent hyperinflation. The government estimates that it is also necessary to decrease public spending by at least 20 per cent. Meanwhile, in the past months the government has been exposed to sharp criticism by some economic structures in the country.

Despite the critics, Markovic has announced that the government will persist in its reforms. This month, a series of reform laws will be put forward in the fields of foreign currency, customs, foreign trade and sales tax. The government considers that this is all aimed at stabilising political conditions in the country, stepping up economic efficiency and encouraging foreign investors who last year invested some two billion marks in Yugoslavia. The financial support given by international institutions (IMF, World Bank, etc.) is very important and these institutions welcome the programme of Yugoslav reforms. That support, in the form of investment in important projects and infrastructure, amounts to several billion dollars — Tanjug Features.

Israeli censor's thick blue line

By Ian Black

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL Avi Gur Ari is an amiable enough man for a military censor and sometimes he even cracks a wry joke about his job, but he wields his blue pencil without mercy — and without humour — in the name of Israel's national security.

From two cramped rooms in the Government Press Office in central Jerusalem, the balding, bespectacled colonel and his colleagues sift daily through press, radio and television reports, making cuts, ordering changes, and sometimes killing entire stories. Their authority, grounded in law, applies to Israeli, Palestinian and foreign journalists, though not in equal measure. The system works, but unevenly and unfairly. Calls for changes are often heard, though rarely heeded.

Israel's censorship is run by the army and answers to the defence minister, but it embraces a wide range of subjects — 69 are listed — which go far beyond strictly military matters; careless talk by soldiers is not the main issue. Its latest controversial application — to information about the numbers of Soviet Jewish immigrants coming to Israel, the routes they take, and where they settle — illustrates just how easily a grey area can be created. Israel has good reason to fear Arab terrorist attacks on these immigrants as they traverse three countries. But it is also concerned about the political repercussions of the immigration, especially international pressure against their settlement in the occupied territories.

So is censorship justified? Before an answer can be given it is worth noting that the system cannot make up its collective mind; statistics about the immigrants are released regularly by different government agencies; the routes they take and where they live are not secret; and in this area censorship has been applied only rarely.

It is in the nature of the beast that its effectiveness is hard to judge. Common sense helps: the names of the heads of Israel's security and intelligence services may not be published, although they are widely known to many journalists, and it is fair to assume they are known to the country's enemies too; and the sensational book by Victor Ostrovsky, a disgruntled former Mossad officer living in Canada, ensured that many spooky secrets came out.

Israel's media have cooperated with censorship since the system was set up in 1949, based on tough emergency regulations promulgated by the British authorities during the Palestine Mandate. Reports about sensitive matters are given on a routine basis to Col. Avi and his counterparts in Tel Aviv and Haifa. Sometimes notices are issued demanding that material on specific subjects be submitted for prior approval. Information about

Israeli military responses to the Gulf crisis has been very closely controlled. It was formally announced on Oct. 1, for example, that gas masks were to be distributed to the public to meet the threat of an Iraqi attack, although that fact had been known for days beforehand.

Journalists who write about defence, the occupied territories, the Arab World, and foreign policy suffer most. Before the invasion of Kuwait, one Israeli reporter found that a convincing but completely imaginary scenario he had written about how the next Middle East war could begin had been spiked: a lot of it was about Iraq. On another occasion, removal of his byline from a story was ordered because the Tel Aviv censor believed his (deserved) reputation lent credence to an argument which the authorities did not wish to be aired authoritatively.

It can be deeply frustrating business and the pressure of deadlines means that an appeal, even if successful, can come too late. Sometimes months of hard work go down the drain or is decimated. One talented investigative writer produced a riveting account of

have been closed and fined. This happened to the Hadashot daily when it published a photograph of two Arabs who had been beaten to death by Shin Bet security agents after hijacking a bus.

Most foreign journalists tread a fine line between the permissible and the forbidden, although few initiate contact with the censor. Some powerful American papers, especially the New York Times which enjoys almost royal status, get away with murder. News agencies are far more closely controlled because their stories appear in something approaching "real time" and could, theoretically, help an enemy. So when in May Palestinian raiders landed on the Israeli coast at 10 a.m. blanket censorship was enforced until 4 p.m. when it was all over. Direct computer input has made supervision harder, few people dictate their stories by telephone these days because the censor can physically cut off a call.

Sometimes the authorities can surprise by their post facto vehemence. Col. Avi complained bitterly when I wrote a piece from South Lebanon

Israeli officials insist that censorship of the Arab Press is minimal (untrue), but admit that it is discriminatory (true).

the case of Prof. Marcus Klingberg, a senior government biologist who disappeared after supposedly undergoing a nervous breakdown. All 4,000 words were killed.

Sensitive stories can be run if they have already appeared in the foreign media. This absurdity means that an Israeli reporter with the scoop of a lifetime that cannot be published in Israel, may quietly leak it to the Guardian and then quote it the day afterwards, attributing the story to someone else. But the Guardian may not get away with it either: the international press is far from immune to the blue pencil, and sanctions when it is ignored. In recent years foreign correspondents have had their accreditation briefly suspended because of reports about the abduction of Mordechai Vanunu, the man who gave Israel's nuclear secrets to the Sunday Times, the killing of the PLO military leader, Abu Jihad, and the existence of West Bank "death squads."

The penalties, however, are less severe than for the Israeli media. Only one foreign correspondent has had his accreditation permanently withdrawn, but Israeli newspapers which mentioned the use of a new-fangled optical device employed by Israeli tanks in the "security zone." The piece was dated in Tyre, and the information in it came from sources in Lebanon, not Israel. Yet when I crossed back over the border, I faced a severe reprimand and, despite repeated requests, was never given an explanation of whether the blue pencil could legitimately be applied in such cases.

While censorship for some Israelis is a serious headache and for foreigners a tolerable bother, for Palestinians it represents an insurmountable barrier to producing decent news papers, even though — unfashionable truth — they are still freer than most in the Arab World.

Facts and opinions alike are routinely censored. Arabic papers and magazines published in East Jerusalem often leave white space where their censored editorials should have appeared. Many news items, especially relating to the intifada, can be printed only after they have first appeared in the much freer Israeli media. Operational details — soldiers disguised as women or tourists, Shin Bet activities —

"You never know when, how and why the censor will wake up and bite you."

are banned. In the evening, a common sight to the censored Arab messenger bearing Col. Avi's office, scanning the cuts on their page proofs. An argument in the Israeli defence establishment about allowing a freer Palestinian press has never been resolved.

Most Palestinians grudgingly accept the need for censorship of strictly security matters but complain that it goes far beyond that, and is highly unpredictable. "We feel like someone in a swimming pool full of crocodiles," says Fadiwan Abu Ayyash, chairman of the West Bank Journalists' Association. "You never know when, how, and why the censor will wake up and bite you."

Israeli officials insist that censorship of the Arab press is minimal (untrue), but admit that it is discriminatory (true). "When you have a press that represents your adversary or enemy," a senior army officer said, "you discriminate against it." Yet not only news is scrutinised; advertisements, literary pieces, and even marriage announcements are checked. Translated from the Hebrew, press have also to be submitted. From poetry, a famous Arabic medium, "nationalist" images are often deleted, as are "stones" and "moths" which

have been known to disappear. Some critics argue that it is a "censorship of the censor." But the Arab press is not immune from the censor's hand. Including military and paramilitary publications, the PLO's "Voice of the People" and "Voice of the Revolution" — deep Palestinian nationalism — are censored.

But the censor is not the issue. The Arab press is a former owner of the Al-Fajr daily, puts it bluntly. "I write, 'Yesterday Israeli soldiers jumped out of a truck at Darb al-Balut with their guns drawn, and opened three Palestinian teenagers up against a wall, killed them. Some were hit in the head, and one would not get into the hospital because he was too badly injured.' I say 'Yesterday Israeli soldiers jumped out of a truck at Darb al-Balut. I have a photo of the truck. Of course, the first account accurately described the scene.'"

illegal activities. Bluntly, little change can be expected as long as the occupation continues.

Inside the democracy of Israel's pre-1967 borders, it is a different matter; there are occasional flashes of hope that the system may change. Last year the High Court forced the censor to allow publication of an article which criticised the performance of the then anonymous head of the Mossad.

But that breakthrough has not been followed by greater openness. An all-party Knesset subcommittee recommended this summer that the number of subjects covered by censorship be drastically reduced, but it also called for tougher penalties for infringements over military and intelligence matters. Israel's security is still very much a sacred cow, and few are prepared to slaughter it, especially when the likes of Saddam Hussein are on the loose. Some, like Yossi Sarid, the outspoken left-wing chairman of the Knesset subcommittee, want the censorship system to undergo corrective surgery, but not to identify the animal and not to wield the knife in any easy task.

This article is reprinted from The Guardian.

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Oil prices tumble

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Oil prices tumbled more than \$3 per barrel Friday as President George Bush held out the possibility of a diplomatic solution to the Gulf crisis.

Contracts for light sweet crude fell more than \$1 per barrel in a span of several minutes while Bush was on television giving his assessment of the crisis. His remarks followed a vote late Thursday in which the U.N. Security Council authorized the use of force against Iraq.

Crude then kept falling sharply, sinking below the \$30 per barrel threshold, after Bush's news conference had ended.

Early Friday afternoon, contracts for delivery in January were

down \$3.01 per 42-gallon barrel, at \$29.90 on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Contracts for crude delivery in several later months were down by their daily limit of \$1.50 per barrel.

Bush said he would invite Iraq's foreign minister, to come to Washington in December to discuss the situation. Bush also mentioned the possibility that he would send Secretary of State James Baker to Baghdad.

"The reaction is very much to his inviting Tareq Aziz to Washington and Baker to Baghdad," said Ann-Louise Hirtle, a senior oil analyst with Shearson Lehman Brothers Inc. brokerage firm.

Pakistan faces bleak economic times ahead

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — With Pakistan's international creditors awaiting repayment, foreign reserves tumbling and massive price hikes unavoidable, former Premier Benazir Bhutto may have found the silver lining behind her stunning defeat in the October elections.

The opposition benches appear to be the safest seats in parliament for any politician now, according to political analysts and economists.

Reeling from skyrocketing oil prices, short-term borrowing and rapidly depleting foreign reserves, Pakistan put out a billion-dollar cry for help.

"There's no way we can cover the losses ourselves," said Finance Minister Sartaz Aziz. "One billion dollars we can make up on our own, but we need help with another billion dollars," Aziz said.

Japan was the first to respond, offering a \$500 million assistance package announced in mid-November in several Urdu-language daily newspapers.

The announcement coincided with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan's five-day visit to Tokyo for the enthronement of Emperor Akihito.

Pakistan will try to cut costs by a billion dollars by hiking prices, implementing strict conservation measures and increasing exports while reducing imports.

"If the economy is to improve you have to have people willing to take the heat," said a leading Western economist, who asked not to be identified.

The United States suspended a \$500 million aid package last month after U.S. President George Bush refused to certify that Pakistan does not possess a nuclear bomb.

"It doesn't hurt us immediately. There's still some aid in the pipeline," Aziz said.

For three months after Bhutto's government was dismissed Aug. 6 on corruption charges, Pakistan did little to direct its economy, concentrating instead on staying afloat until after the October general elections.

The caretaker government refused to hike prices, fearing it could cost the election. Instead, it took out short-term loans with high interest rates to pay the bills.

Now with the economy crumbling, it's difficult to see how the new government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif can forge ahead with his promised industrial revolution.

Gulf crisis scrambles Jordanian economy

By Zina Hemady
The Associated Press

AMMAN — Business is bad in Jordan, one of the countries hardest hit by the Gulf crisis. But food is abundant and promises of aid are trickling in from abroad.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, sandwiched between Iraq and Israel, has survived the turbulence of the Middle East since it was established in 1921. But many analysts consider Jordan's current predicament its most perilous politically and economically.

"God help us if there's a war," said Fahed Faneek, a prominent economist.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, who faces an international army opposed to his Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait, could drag Israel into the conflagration, exposing Jordan. The oil that comes exclusively from Iraq to meet Jordan's domestic needs of 60,000 barrels a day will be cut off.

The country will probably be flooded with refugees from Iraq and Kuwait, as it was in August and September when more than 735,000 refugees passed through. Many had to be fed and accommodated by the Jordanians until they could be repatriated.

Prices of imported foods, including meat, have increased considerably. But fruit and vegetable grown in the Jordan Valley have become cheaper because they're not being exported to Gulf countries any more.

The Finance Ministry estimates that Jordan has lost \$2 billion in revenue this year because of the Gulf crisis. With a debt already at \$3.3 billion before August, such losses could be catastrophic.

Faneek said Jordan will be able to keep its economy afloat with \$1 billion in aid a year. But so far, it has only been promised \$115 million by Germany, \$250 million by Japan, \$20 million by France and almost \$19 million from the Netherlands as compensation for abiding by the U.N.-imposed trade embargo on

Iraq. The European Community also has promised aid to Jordan, but the amount has not yet been set.

Jordan's refusal to join the anti-Iraq coalition and the Kingdom's advocacy of a negotiated "Arab solution" has stirred widespread resentment in the United States, Europe and the Gulf, traditionally Jordan's backers.

Amman was accused of hesitating to implement U.N. sanctions against Iraq, until August its main trading partner. The government came under fire by the international community and was accused of dragging its feet in pressuring Iraq.

Oil-rich Gulf countries opposing Iraq cut all trade with the Kingdom to pressure it to join the anti-Iraq alliance. The Saudis cut off oil supplies, leaving Jordan no option but to truck it in from Iraq.

Faneek said Jordan's losses have so far not yet seriously affected the Kingdom's three million people.

But he stressed: "With the current stalemate, we may

start seeing shortages in two months' time."

Jordanian companies have maintained production levels and are planning for what they hope will be a limited disruption.

"That's why they haven't fired workers yet," Faneek said. But how long they can do that is questionable because they can't export much of their merchandise. The U.N.-imposed trade embargo on Iraq has brought Jordan's only port of Aqaba to a virtual standstill.

The Red Sea port was Iraq's main entrepot as well and few ships bother to go there any more.

Export losses

The government estimates Jordan's export losses since August at \$440 million.

Many businesses are reporting a drop in sales of up to 60 per cent. Supermarket manager Ibrahim Darraj said business has suffered because the store has to close early under a government energy-

saving plan.

The people most affected are the Jordanians who worked in Kuwait before the invasion.

The government estimates there were 300,000 Jordanians, many of them of Palestinian origin, in Kuwait before the invasion. At least half have come back to look for jobs in a country where, by Faneek's estimation, unemployment runs at around 20 per cent.

Most of these people were remitting an estimated \$800 million a year, two-thirds of Jordan's foreign currency reserves.

Those who kept their savings in Kuwaiti currency became penniless overnight. Iraq decreed the Kuwaiti dinar, once one of the Middle East's strongest currencies, would be equivalent to the Iraqi dinar. Iraqi currency is not convertible. On the thinly-traded free market it was worth about one-tenth of the Kuwaiti dinar before Aug. 2 and less now.

The government estimates that Jordanian workers lost as much as \$8 billion in property and savings.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Thursday, November 29, 1990
Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell	French franc	131.4	132.2
U.S. dollar	658.0	662.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	504.9	507.9
Pound Sterling	1295.9	1303.7	Dutch guilder	392.1	395.5
Deutsche mark	443.4	446.1	Swedish crown	118.2	119.0
Swiss franc	519.9	523.0	Italian lire (for 100)	29.0	29.4
			Belgian franc (for 10)	214.7	216.0

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One Sterling	1.9350/60	U.S. dollar	
One U.S. dollar	1.1660/70	Canadian dollar	
	1.5050/55	Deutsche mark	
	1.6990/7000	Dutch guilders	
	1.2825/35	Swiss francs	
	31.05/10	Belgian francs	
	5.0730/80	French francs	
	1129/1130	Italian lire	
	133.15/25	Japanese yen	
	5.6260/6310	Swedish crowns	
	5.8700/50	Norwegian crowns	
	5.7700/50	Danish crowns	
One ounce of gold	385.00/385.50	U.S. dollars	

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

TOKYO — Stocks closed lower but well off their lows. The Nikkei Index fell more than 700 points on a weaker yen in the morning but recovered some ground later, closing 257.97 lower at 22,454.63.

SYDNEY — Shares slumped to their lowest level in three weeks as investors became more anxious about the Gulf crisis. The All Ordinaries Index fell 22.6 to 1319.7.

HONG KONG — Prices ended lower in thin turnover, rebounding from their lows after the Tokyo market recovered some of its early losses. The Hang Seng Index slipped 13.29 to close at 2,965.06.

SINGAPORE — Share prices closed broadly softer but off morning lows on later bargain-hunting after a partial recovery in Tokyo. The Straits Times Index fell 2.82 to end at 1,106.59.

BOMBAY — Share prices finished broadly lower for the third day, undermined by fears of war in the Gulf and worsening internal economic crisis, brokers said. The Bombay Stock Exchange Index fell 12.31 points to 1,196.25.

FRANKFURT — Share prices were unexpectedly strong ahead of the first all-German elections in nearly six decades. The Dax Index climbed 22.31 to 1,441.23.

ZURICH — Frankfurt's strength and signs that Swiss inflation was levelling off helped the All-Share SPI Index gain 11.4 points to 901.2.

LONDON — Shares got a late boost from U.S. President George Bush's offer to send his secretary of state to meet Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. The FTSE Index closed 13.8 higher at 2,149.4.

NEW YORK — President Bush's offer of high-level talks with Iraq countered early losses. But at 1637 GMT the Dow Jones industrials were down 2.23 points to 2,516.58.

Turkish miners strike

ANKARA (R) — Nearly 50,000 Turkish coal workers went on strike Friday, spelling more trouble for government efforts to combat inflation now running at 60 per cent a year.

Union leaders said 48,500 miners at Zonguldak mine on the Black Sea coast had stopped work to press a wage claim.

Officials of the miners' union Genel Maden IS said it had failed to agree with the state-run Turkish Coal Board (TTK) in negotiations which started in June.

The union is demanding an 876 per cent increase over the present daily minimum wage of 8,705 lira (\$3) for its members. TTK has offered 95 per cent.

Union militancy is on the rise in Turkey, where inflation has outstripped many salaries in the last three years, especially in the public sector.

"In percentage terms the demand can be seen as astronomical, but present base salaries cannot cover essential human needs," Ali Akgun, secretary-general of Genel Maden IS, told Reuters.

Akgun said a crowd of over 40,000 miners, wives and children had demonstrated in the streets in Zonguldak.

War in Gulf means worse U.S. recession

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United States faces a mild recession provided there is no war in the Middle East, economists say, but the slump could be long and severe if fighting breaks out in the Gulf.

The growing political crisis over Western determination to force Iraq out of Kuwait by any means necessary has become the major unknown factor in deciding whether the world's largest economy comes out of recession by about mid-1991.

Many economists say a Gulf war following the Security Council's vote authorising force

against Iraq would likely mean a serious recession, with widespread joblessness and runaway inflation, as Western industrial economies see their precious oil lifelines cut.

Index drops:

The government's chief economic forecasting gauge fell in October for the fourth straight month, the government said Friday, signalling a recession that many economists believe already is under way.

The 1.2 per cent plunge in the Commerce Department's index

of Leading Economic Indicators was the latest in a string of gloomy reports on the economy.

Eight of the 11 forward-looking components in the index fell. The index actually dropped 0.1 per cent in July rather than remaining unchanged as first reported.

Three consecutive declines in the index have been viewed as a fairly reliable — although not infallible — sign that a recession is approaching. The gauge is designed to forecast economic conditions six to nine months in advance.

"The role of the Iraqi oil will be to intensify the recession and to produce much higher overall inflation — for a time, stagflation — and to increase the risks that a much worse result could occur," said Allen Sinai, chief economist for the Boston Company in New York.

Stagflation is the term economists use to describe a situation of both stagnant growth and rapidly rising prices, a peculiarly troublesome condition as the remedy for each problem aggravates the other.

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In
FINAL MISSION
Performances: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30

Cinema Tel: 634144
PHILADELPHIA
ROOF TOPS
Show: 13:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 699238
PLAZA
Ahmad Zaki/Raghdah
In
CAPORIA
Show: 12:30, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15, 9:45 p.m.

Gorbachev admits his failures

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Mikhail Gorbachev has judged himself and other Communists "guilty before the working class" in a candid admission of blame for the country's worsening economy and political paralysis.

He told nearly 1,000 delegates to the 28th Moscow City Communist Party conference that the Soviet Union faced increasing difficulties with food supplies, ethnic conflicts, crime and "a battle of laws that has led to a paralysis of power."

"The reasons," Gorbachev said Thursday, were "errors in the actions of central organs, above all in the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and including the actions of the general secretary and president."

Gorbachev, 59, is both the country's president and general secretary of the 18-million-member party.

In an hour-long speech, he promised immediate steps to increase food supplies, reiterated his determination to hold the republics together, and urged the delegates to keep the common man in mind.

The Soviet president said failure by the party leadership to address workers' concerns was responsible for its defeat in recent elections around the country.

"We are guilty before the working class. I think, all of us, and I personally take responsibility," he said.

But Gorbachev told the delegates earlier Thursday he had no intention of quitting as party leader. He also said he was firmly

in favour of maintaining the party's dominance in society.

Standing on a podium near an 8-foot (2.4-metre)-tall bust of Lenin, he spoke confidently and extemporaneously.

The speech appeared aimed at disarming his critics — led by Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin — by accepting a measure of blame while vigorously asserting that the party is on the road to renewal and can solve the country's problems.

A poll published Thursday in the government newspaper Izvestia indicated the number of people who "fully trust" the party fell from 27 per cent in December 1988 to 14 per cent in July. Izvestia gave no details on the polling.

Gorbachev and Yeltsin differ on how to achieve a market economy, and Yeltsin's Russian parliament claims the right to pass laws superseding national ones.

Nearly all of the 15 Soviet Republics have taken similar steps towards autonomy. Several have stopped shipping food outside their borders, aggravating the shortages in major cities.

Gorbachev announced that agreements were reached Wednesday with the republics of Estonia, Kazakhstan and the Ukraine to send dairy products to Moscow and Leningrad, where milk has all but disappeared from stores this month.

He also said the country's two largest cities would receive first priority for food purchased or donated from abroad, and indicated that powdered milk would be taken out of storage and distributed.

Some delegates jeered when he said supplies of key non-dairy products — meat, bread and vegetables — have remained the same or risen since last year in Moscow.

"Then why isn't there anything in the stores?" one man shouted.

Answering delegates' written questions, the Soviet president reiterated his desire for a political solution to the Gulf crisis. But he also toughened his position, calling for military pressure to force Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to withdraw his troops from Kuwait.

"Everything must be done, including military pressure — pressure, I am using that word exactly — to force the Hussein regime to understand that the annexation must be halted."

Gorbachev defended his frequent trips abroad and took some credit for ending the cold war.

He said that when he assumed power in 1985, "people were saying, 'We are willing to endure anything. Mikhail Sergeyevich, if only there is no war.'"

Now, he said, "no one remembers that, and what's more, they've decided that Gorbachev travels abroad too much and (say) 'enough of this travel... it's time to take care of our own problems at home.'"

Gorbachev said the criticism was actually testimony to how far the nation has come in improving relations with the West.

"It's the best praise possible," he said.

Visit to Moldova postponed

Gorbachev Friday postponed a one-day trip to the restive Republic of Moldova but hopes to reschedule the visit, a presidential spokesman said.

"The trip was planned but for certain reasons it was postponed," spokesman Sergei Grigoriev told Reuters. "We can only speculate as to the reasons."

He said Gorbachev's busy schedule required him to be back in Moscow by Friday evening, allowing no flexibility in his programme.

Earlier, Radio Mayak and local officials in the Moldovan capital of Kishinev said heavy fog around the city had blocked incoming flights and delayed the president's arrival.

The visit was to have been Gorbachev's first full trip within the Soviet Union in nearly a year. It was seen as a bid to deflect criticism from recent trips to Spain, France and Italy and show a greater commitment in tackling the Soviet Union's divisions.

The planned trip to Moldova, where at least three people died in ethnic-based clashes last month, comes two days after he cancelled a trip to Norway to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, saying the crisis at home needed his "hour by hour" attention.

Moldova, formerly Moldavia, has been hit by ethnic tensions as breakaway Turkic and Russian minorities battle what they see as discrimination by the Romanian-speaking majority.

Relations strained as Qian starts talks in U.S.

WASHINGTON (AP) — Amid new signs of uneasiness in Sino-American relations, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen is meeting with U.S. officials in his first visit since before the 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators.

The Chinese official Thursday participated in the New York meeting where the United Nations Security Council approved a resolution authorising use of military force to drive Iraq out of Kuwait.

Qian said earlier this week he expected to meet with President George Bush, but no such meeting was scheduled by late Thursday. A session with members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee was set for Friday afternoon.

Chinese officials had led the Bush administration to believe that Qian would support the resolution on Iraq but he opted instead to abstain, causing surprise and disappointment at the State Department.

Qian revealed he was not prepared to support the resolution as he was leaving Peking for New York. He left the impression among some that his government was annoyed with speculation that the United States was inviting Qian to Washington to reward him for China's support in the Gulf crisis.

Hours before the vote, the Chinese Foreign Ministry denied there was any link between China's stand on the resolution and Qian's invitation to visit Washington.

Baker had wanted as lopsided a vote as possible to send a clear signal to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein of international resolve on the Gulf situation. China supported all 10 previous Security Council resolutions on that issue. Excluding China's vote, the tally Thursday was 12-2 in support of the resolution.

There also are clear signs that human rights questions continue to be a sore point between the two countries. The State Department said human rights would be on the agenda for Friday's meeting with Qian. Asked about that possibility Thursday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Li Zhaoxing said in Peking, "It is not appropriate to interfere in some developing countries' internal affairs with an excuse of human rights."

The Bush administration has barred high-level exchanges with China as a show of displeasure over its crackdown on demonstrators in Tiananmen Square in June 1989.

It has said Qian's visit does not violate that policy because his discussions in Washington are regarded as "contacts," which are permitted. Meetings in the category of "large ceremonial exchanges" are barred.

The State Department has noted that Baker has met on a number of previous occasions with Qian since the events at Tiananmen Square. Three of the meetings were in New York and the others were in Paris and Cairo.

Baker is being urged to press human rights issues privately and in public when he receives China's foreign minister.

Letters to Baker from the chairman of a congressional human rights panel and from Asia Watch, an independent Washington-based human rights organisation, asked the secretary to link improvement of U.S.-China relations more firmly to Chinese action to halt persecution of citizens seeking more democracy.

"Even though China has been relatively supportive of U.S. policy in the Gulf and in developing a peace agreement in Cambodia, it is imperative that the Chinese government is reminded that progress on human rights is the key to improvement of ties with the United States," said a letter to Baker from Congressman Gus Yatron, chairman of the House of Representatives Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organisations.

Yatron urged Baker to stress to Qian a need for "fundamental changes" in Chinese human rights and to tell him "unless China's human rights record significantly improves," Congress will revive proposals to cancel U.S. trade concessions for China after it reconvenes in 1991.

Qian should be reminded that in the final days of its last session, the House "overwhelmingly passed two bills either conditioning or denying most-favoured-nation (trade) status to China based on that country's dismal human rights record," Yatron said.

Dhaka lifts curfew in cities; protests continue

NEW DELHI (AP) — Bangladesh lifted a curfew in Dhaka and three other major cities for seven hours Friday, but protests continued against the state of emergency declared by President Hussain Muhammad Ershad.

It was the longest relaxation since Ershad declared the state of emergency Tuesday night to cope with mounting protests demanding his resignation.

In Dhaka, the capital, club-wielding riot police beat some of about 200 women who demonstrated on a major street, according to reports reaching India by unofficial channels.

A few journalists observing the demonstration also were beaten, according to witnesses who requested anonymity because of a government-imposed news blackout.

The protesters had gathered outside the National Press Club in Dhaka. After they started chanting "we don't accept censorship," they were confronted by about 100 riot policemen, according to the unofficial reports.

In Chittagong, Bangladesh's second-largest city, 446 doctors, teachers and staffers at the Chittagong Medical College and Hospital resigned to protest the emergency declaration, according to reports conveyed by intermediaries.

In another development, an engine and three coaches of a passenger train derailed north of Dhaka because of a loose section of track, railroad spokesman Jamil Ahmad said in Dhaka.

Sabotage was suspected, according to a senior railroad official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

No injuries were reported in the Thursday night derailment.

Residents of Dhaka, scene of much of the violence in the 6-week-old anti-Ershad campaign, streamed out of their homes in search of food when the curfew was suspended at 8 a.m. (0200 GMT) Friday, according to the reports reaching India.

The city of 7 million people appeared calm at mid-morning, with traffic returning to the streets after the relaxation of the curfew, said an Associated Press reporter in a censored report from Dhaka. No immediate reports were available from the three other cities where the curfew was temporarily lifted.

Under the state of emergency imposed Tuesday night, all civil rights are suspended and news reports are censored. Ershad, a former army general who took power in a bloodless coup in 1982, said the emergency was needed to preserve "internal security and the national economy."

On Friday morning, the state-run radio repeated its Thursday night bulletin that "the country remained largely peaceful." State-run television did not refer to the emergency or the law-and-order situation during its mid-morning newscast.

The government, in a news release Thursday night, said only a few incidents marred the peaceful situation Thursday.

Column 80000

Village adults to be fingerprinted after murder

CAHORS, France (AP) — Police, confounded by what seems like the perfect murder, will take fingerprints this weekend of all 200 adult residents of the village of Montgey, officials said. Investigators have tried for nearly a year to find the murderer of Raymonde Marignat, an elderly village woman found bound and suffocated with a rag on Nov. 22, 1989, in a shed near her home. The motive for the crime continues to elude investigators. Judge Charles Pinaud, police sources said, Pinaud found the victim's house completely ransacked, but her money, checks and identity papers were not taken. Village Mayor Rene Migayrou said the judge asked him to call all adult villagers to the municipal auditorium so police could fingerprint them. Migayrou said he had received no complaints "and lots of people think this should have been done sooner." The mayor said he personally thinks the murderer is not among the villagers and this operation will silence the rumours running through town for the past year.

Taiwan repatriates orangutans to Indonesia

TAIPEI (AP) — A group of Taiwanese schoolchildren escorted 10 orangutans back to Indonesia in Taiwan's first repatriation of the rare animals, which were smuggled into this island. The 104 primary school students were to meet in Indonesia with conservationists who would help the apes return to their natural environment in the forests of Borneo, officials said. The orangutans have been housed in Taipei's zoo since May, when they were seized by customs officials. "We are glad the orangutans can return home and live a free life," said fifth grader Lin Tien-Yu. Lin Hsiang-Nung, vice chairman of the Council of Agriculture, said the repatriation showed the Taiwan government's determination to enforce wildlife protection in Taiwan. He also urged conservationists and Taiwan owners of other orangutans to send the animals back. The orangutan is listed as an endangered animal.

Tokyo, Osaka are world's most expensive cities

GENEVA (R) — Tokyo and Osaka are the world's two most expensive cities, according to a private consultancy which ranked Livelihood and Brazzaville in Africa as the next dearest. A survey issued by the Geneva-based Corporate Resource Group (CRG) put Oslo, Helsinki, Zurich, Geneva, Stockholm and Copenhagen in the rest of its top 10. The one bargain in Europe was Prague, beaten by Quito, Ecuador, for the cheapest cost-of-living of 100 cities reviewed. New York, used as a standard to compare such costs as food and drink, services, clothing, utilities, transportation and entertainment, was 41st on the list. Housing costs were excluded by the survey, done in September. Tehran ranked first in May but a CRG spokesman said Iran's capital was dropped because of problems getting cost data. CRG said the biggest change came in the Western hemisphere where Brazil's Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro had become by far the most expensive because of high inflation.

Gorbachev jests about economic confusion

MOSCOW (AP) — Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev emerged from an all-day parliamentary session in a jovial mood, and told reporters a joke about the faltering Soviet economy. "I can't really tell it with ladies present," Gorbachev teased toward the end of a 20-minute session with journalists in a Kremlin lobby after a meeting of the Congress of Peoples' Deputies of the Russian Federation. "Oh, go ahead," said women reporters and lawmakers. Gorbachev grinned and proceeded with a joke about himself, French President Francois Mitterrand and U.S. President George Bush. "They say that Mitterrand has 100 lovers. One has AIDS, but he doesn't know which one," said Gorbachev. "Bush has 100 bodyguards. One is a terrorist, but he doesn't know which one. Gorbachev has 100 economic advisers. One is smart, but he doesn't know which one," the Soviet president said.

Japan to give medical aid to Moscow

TOKYO (Agencies) — Japan's cabinet decided Friday to give medical aid to the Soviet Union for the first time.

Foreign Minister spokesman Taiso Watanabe said the cabinet decided to give 2.6 billion yen (\$20 million) through the World Health Organisation (WHO) in medicines and medical equipment to the victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

It was also considering additional medical aid for the Soviet people, he said.

Tokyo has never signed a peace treaty with Moscow because of a dispute over four islands the Soviet Union has occupied since 1945.

Watanabe quoted the cabinet as agreeing "to continue to support the legitimate direction and movement of perestroika and extend technological assistance to it."

"It agreed to try to realise at the earliest improvement of fundamental relations, including a peace treaty to be concluded at the time of the visit of President Mikhail Gorbachev next April," he said.

The visit by Gorbachev will be the first by a Soviet head of state to Japan.

He said the aid for the Chernobyl victims arose out of a joint

study by Japanese and Soviet doctors on the after-effects of the tragedy and Japanese doctors might accompany the aid.

"The cabinet also agreed to consider extra medical aid to the Soviet people," he added. The amount will not be as large as that for the Chernobyl victims.

Asked about possible food aid, Watanabe said that this needed more study. "When the wheat harvest is the best in recent years, why do people starve? There is no easy answer."

He said that if the situation deteriorated and starvation broke out the situation would change.

Bulgarian premier resigns

SOFIA (AP) — The last remnants of Bulgaria's Communist Party have been removed from office, as premier Andrei Lukanov and his Socialist government gave in to unrelenting popular pressure and resigned.

Lukonov's Socialist Party is the former Communist Party, renamed last spring. Lukonov said Bulgaria's new premier will not come from his party.

"This represents the true end to communism in Bulgaria," Petar Beron, leader of the opposition Union of Democratic Forces, said in an interview Thursday.

"It is important that finally we are free of Communists," said Violeta Petrova, a housewife.

Tens of thousands of demonstrators, eagerly awaiting word on Lukonov's resignation around the Grand National Assembly, burst into cheers after hearing the news of the government's fall. Police estimated the crowd at up to 70,000.

"Lukonov KGB spy," and "down with Communists" chanted the jubilant crowd, waving blue flags of the main opposition alliance. Some uncorked champagne bottles.

Sofia radio played the Beatles' Let It Be, and television showed the crumbling of the Berlin Wall.

After Lukonov and his cabinet announced their resignations, the opposition trade union Podkrepa and the confederation of Independent Trade Unions immediately called for a general strike. The action started Monday to force Lukonov out of office.

The Bulgarian parliament Friday accepted the resignation of Lukonov and agreed to work to form a caretaker government.

The packed chamber voted by a large majority in favour of the resignation.

His resignation was smoothed by an agreement between the Socialists and the UDF to discuss a caretaker government under a neutral prime minister.

German convoy leaves

Meanwhile a truck convoy carrying emergency food aid from Germany to the Soviet Union set off Friday, the first delivery by land of food to help the country through a winter of shortages.

Four trucks and four vans left a German Red Cross depot near Bonn shortly after dawn headed for Moscow via Berlin and Warsaw, a 2,500 kilometre journey expected to last four to five days.

They were carrying some 5,000 food parcels donated by Germans for elderly and disabled people in the Soviet capital, Red Cross officials said.

A second convoy would follow next week if all went well with the initial delivery, the officials added.

A Soviet transport plane landed in Moscow Thursday night with a first delivery of 37 tonnes of food from Germany, where people have responded generously to charity appeals for help for the Soviet Union.

U.S. urged to shift intelligence priority

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two Democratic senators say that the United States needs to change intelligence priorities to protect itself on the economic front now that the cold war is over.

While retaining the strongest military power, "we are slipping economically," and for the first time in 1992 "our no. 1 expenditure will be interest" on debt, said Sen. Paul Simon of Illinois.

"No one, whether liberal or conservative, thinks this is rational," he added. "It is a massive redistribution of wealth."

Preceding over the first of two public Foreign Relations Committee hearings on national security Wednesday was Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York. The two senators and expert wit-

nesses said U.S. intelligence must reduce secrecy, shifting emphasis from geopolitical and military security to economic security.

"You would have thought by now there would have been some (Republican) administration effort" along such lines, Moynihan said.

The new world order was variously described as one made up of one superpower, the United States, in a "multipolar world" of several major powers and economic challenges, especially from Japan.

"The clear-cut cold war world of good guys and bad guys gives way to a world of grey guys," said Samuel P. Huntington, a National Security official under President Jimmy Carter and now

director of the Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University.

Moynihan and Huntington criticised the quality of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) economic analysis provided the government. In the late 1990s, the CIA estimated Soviet gross national product at 62 per cent of U.S. GNP while Soviet economists now admit it was never more than 20 per cent, the senator said.

CIA spokesman Mark Mansfield, asked for comment, said: "For years, we have emphasised the severity of the Soviet Union's economic problems and the negative impact of its overcommitment to defence. Our most recent analyses reflect the continuity of our assessment rather than any sudden reevaluation."

E. Germans face 4th election in 34 weeks

BERLIN (AP) — After four decades of "faded elections that gave the Communists a numbing succession of imaginary landslide, eastern Germans are suddenly awash in the freedom to choose.

On Sunday, they will join their Western counterparts for the first united German elections since 1932.

For a people long denied fundamental rights, that will be the fourth free and fair election in the past 10 months in what used to be East Germany.

Some people, it seems, have lost their electoral enthusiasm.

"I won't vote Sunday," said Andrea Fischer, who also skipped the last two elections. "The more I know about these parties, the more they seem almost comical."

East Germans, after overthrowing the Communist hardliners, jubilantly chose a democratic government in March. In May, they elected new local leaders, throwing out hundreds of Communists still clinging to power.

On Oct. 14 — a scant 11 days after German unification — they chose the governments for the five states their nation had become.

But with another historic chapter about to be written Sunday, a definite air of apathy hangs over the former nation.

Some of it has to do with the seeming inevitability of the outcome. Chancellor Helmut Kohl, whose conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) dominated the first three races in eastern Germany, is expected to handily retain his post.

A little of it has to do with a growing familiarity with democratic political campaigns. The novelty has worn off, the euphoria is gone. Political rhetoric is greeted with Western-style cynicism.

A lot of it has to do with the situation of the eastern Germans themselves, who are expected to face a dramatic surge in joblessness as their sputtering enterprises use up what little credit

they have left in the coming months.

"I have a child and a job that I only work four hours a day," said Ms. Fischer, 33, a postal employee who lives in the village of Schildow, north of Berlin.

"I just believe my vote won't make a difference," she said.

Ms. Fischer, who would have supported the environmental Greens Party or the left-leaning Social Democrats, says she believes even they don't have a strong enough message to lure her to a voting booth Sunday.

Kann Wernecke, a 30-year-old Berliner and former Communist, will vote as she always has: For the Communists, now reformed and renamed the Party of Democratic Socialism.

"We won't win, but we need this voice," she said. Ms. Wernecke, a single jobless mother, says she has little hope for the future under the Christian Democrats.

Kohl Thursday publicly scolded his junior coalition partners for trying to prevent him

from gaining an absolute majority in federal elections Sunday.

The dispute did not appear to endanger Kohl's expected overwhelming victory in the first free elections in Germany.

But it reflected fierce manoeuvring for power among his coalition allies in a government that has not yet been formed.

The last-minute feuding lived a campaign that has shown a paucity of drama.

Meanwhile, Kohl and his underdog rival for united Germany's leadership, Social Democrat Oskar Lafontaine, both headed for southern Germany Thursday for a final day of campaigning.

Lafontaine had arranged a rally in his home city, Saarbruecken, while Kohl was to appear in Stuttgart and Offenburg.

Kohl's current government consists of his middle-of-the-road Christian Democrats and their arch-conservative Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union, and the less powerful Liberal Free Democrats.

Rebel convoy destroyed by Sri Lankan helicopters

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Helicopter gunships bombed a Tamil rebel convoy of six trucks in northern Sri Lanka, killing at least 15 guerrillas, military officials said Friday.

They said the convoy was attacked Thursday at Poornery, a rebel-held ferry town 30 kilometres southeast of Jaffna city. Poornery is a transit point for traffic across a 4,000-metre-wide lagoon and one of two main routes from the mainland to the Jaffna peninsula, the rebel stronghold.

Pilots reported that three trucks exploded, indicating they were carrying explosives, the communiqué said.

There was no immediate confirmation of the bombing raid by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the rebel group fighting to set up an independent Tamil nation in northern and eastern Sri Lanka.

A military communiqué said three rebels were killed Thursday by soldiers elsewhere in the north.

The attack was the first major action by government forces against Tamil rebels since a vital army camp at Mankulam was stormed and captured by the Tigers Saturday.

The attack on the Mankulam camp lasted two days and was the worst setback to the government since Tamil rebels resumed fighting after breaking a 13-month ceasefire.

Journalist disappears after denouncing Colombian cartel

BOGOTA (AP) — The president of the Colombian Journalists' Association disappeared after writing a letter denouncing the Medellin cocaine cartel.

Alejandro Jaramillo hasn't been seen for about a week, said the association's secretary, Robinson Ricardo Rada, in statements published Thursday.

Rada said he suspected Jaramillo was taken by the Medellin cartel, which is believed to be holding eight other journalists hostage.

The Colombian Journalists' Association is a national independent trade organisation promoting reporters' interests.

Rada, in comments were published by the Bogota daily news-

paper El Espectador, said Jaramillo received a series of death threats last week after writing a letter to a group of political and church leaders who were trying to negotiate the other journalists' release.

In the letter, Jaramillo denounced a peace offer from drug lords as a manoeuvre to "simply gain breathing room to organise cruel actions against Colombian society."

Members of the Medellin cartel said last week that between 200 and 300 of them would be willing to surrender in a heavily fortified compound protected by the army. In return, they want deals with prosecutors.